

## Concept Note

Calcutta Research Group ([www.mcrg.ac.in](http://www.mcrg.ac.in)) is set to conduct an online course on the city of our time, under the specific theme “Making and Unmaking of Cities”. This online certificate course is to be held from **15 February to 29 March 2025. It has twelve lectures - two lectures on Saturday, consecutively for 7 Saturdays.** It will encompass accounts of making and unmaking of cities in South Asia and the world, issues of urban autonomy and sovereignty, struggles for rights and urban justice, as well as dominant stories that cities tell of themselves. Some of the discussions will be anchored in a political-economy perspective, throwing light on forms of labour in global South, which include cities of South Asia. These cities as urban centres have always been sites of dispossession, eviction, migration, statelessness, relocation, forcible assimilation, mega projects, rising homelessness, and struggles for political reclamations. The online course will explore the process of urbanisation ideologically, sociologically, economically, and politically. It will explore how cities that have been built and rebuilt in the wake of violence, epidemics, climate disasters, modernisation and planning, “futuristic” and smart cities, cities of refuge and creativity, cities expanding and containing their complexities and tensions, cities bulldozed and recreated, cities that are home to crime and labour mobilisation, cities trapped in narratives of tragedy, decline as well as progress, encountering their own fetishization, vanishing and mushrooming. "Making and Unmaking of Cities" is an online course designed to present radical engagements with urbanity and its excess.

### The following six are the sub-themes:

- I. City and Infrastructure
- II. Labour and Economy
- III. Climate Change and Urban Ecological Crisis
- IV. Urban Divides
- V. Conflicts and Urban Protests for Justice
- VI. Images and Imaginations of the City in Transition

This online course is being introduced with the support of Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) fellowship grant to Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, for “**Humanity’s Urban Future**” program. This program aims to understand what makes a good city of the future? It conceives that the future of being human is integrally connected to cities. Statistical projections show how there is fast paced urbanisation and how by 2050 more than 70% of the population will live in the cities. One has to plan for the urban future, as the city has been growing beyond current development plans. In other words, one has to learn from the urban past and also imagine for its future. The program considers important factors such as infrastructure (both material and institutional), political divisions, questions of scale, climate change and other potential crises. While seeking for answers, the program takes six cities as test cases – Calcutta, Toronto, Shanghai, Naples, Mexico City and Kinshasa.